

AMBS alumni news

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I recently watched some episodes of “A.D.: The Bible Continues,” a television mini-series about the early church based on the book of Acts. Whatever its limitations and liberties in telling the story, I appreciated the dramatization’s ability to convey the daily danger Jesus’ followers faced in their volatile religious/political context. The biblical stories, tamed in the familiarity of our many readings and the sterility of the printed page, have lost the intensity of the disciples’ existence, tenuous and fraught with stress and fear.

I suspect, too, that the power of these stories for me had dissipated because they don’t reflect my reality. Unlike Obed Dashan, the AMBS alum whose ministry and service we are recognizing, I need not “include death in my daily budget” when I consider Jesus’ call to count the cost of discipleship. I don’t wish to experience the level of persecution Obed and Jesus’ followers in Nigeria are facing. I am grateful, though, for the chance to walk with Obed and sisters and brothers in Nigeria through the small yet important act of acknowledgement. In this way, the AMBS community can act as the cloud of witnesses to say, “We see you. We love you and pray for you. You are not alone.”

— Brent Eash, chair of the AMBS Alumni Association

2015 Alumni Ministry and Service Recognition OBED DASHAN



Obed Dashan, pastor and church leader in Nigeria, is honored with this year’s Alumni Ministry and Service Recognition.

Obed earned an MDiv in 1990. He also completed Clinical Pastoral Education in Fort Wayne, Ind., and Chicago, Ill., studied at the Seminary Consortium for Urban Pastoral Education (SCUPE) in Chicago, and completed a Doctor of Ministry degree from McCormick Theological Seminary.

Obed was ordained in 1986 and was a teacher and administrator at Gindiri Theological Seminary for 16 years while also serving as a pastor with the Church of Christ in Nations (COCIN) (formerly Church of Christ in Nigeria). He was general secretary of the church from 2011 to 2014 when he was elected vice president. He oversees 85 regional church councils in the denomination of two million members.

In the last several years, as the Boko Haram group has targeted Christian churches and institutions in northern Nigeria with violence, Obed has drawn on the peace theology he learned at AMBS. Much of his ministry is encouraging his people to live faithfully in the midst of

persecution.

Obed acknowledged some of the dilemmas he and other faith leaders face: “AMBS gave me insights for living effectively and faithfully with ambiguity. What do you do when your members are being killed on a daily basis by those who hate the faith? Do you tell people to protect themselves from being killed or do you not? If you do not, are you telling them to ‘cooperate’ with evil? The main challenge here is finding a firm ground in an unstable situation.”

In the face of these challenges, Obed says it is God’s word and the stories of Jesus and Paul that sustain him. “I anchor my life in my relationship with God and entrust my life into his life and ask for his daily presence and peace.

“Ministry here is living each day at a time,” he says. “When you go out and come back alive, you praise God. Here, I include death in my daily budget. That helps me to live each day aware that I am a sojourner here and cannot hold on to the world as if it will not end.”

When asked how others can pray for him, Obed suggested we pray for faith to sustain him in the midst of great challenges; for courage to love those who are persecuting the church; for protection as he travels; and for his ministry of raising up leaders and expanding evangelism efforts in other countries.

Phena, Obed’s wife, also earned an MDiv at AMBS, completing studies in 1991. Their two sons were young boys when the family came to AMBS; their daughter was born in their apartment on the campus.

Obed and Phena hope to visit the United States in late summer or fall and will plan time at AMBS. During that visit, the seminary will have an opportunity to honor Obed and to hear more directly about his ministry. ●

Executive committee nominee

Suella Gerber

My husband, John, and I have lived in Goshen, Ind., for 30-some years. I am pastor at Fellowship of Hope, a small Mennonite congregation in South Central Elkhart, where I have been serving since graduating from AMBS six years ago. As a part-time pastor, I have ample opportunity to pursue my interests, which include exploring the biblical narrative, reading theology, spending time with family and friends, gardening, sitting, and being grandmother. I practice yoga and am an occasional artist.



My siblings and I have recently begun to blog, reflecting on how our past (Amish) informs our present: www.amishmade-beingandbelonging.com. I have recently begun serving on the board of Theology and Peace. Prior to seminary, I was the general manager at the food cooperative, Maple City Market. ●

To affirm Suella Gerber as a member at large on the AMBS Alumni Executive Committee, please return the enclosed postcard or send an email message to Janeen Bertsche Johnson, alumni director: jbjohnson@ambs.edu.

Church Leadership Center offerings

Webinars

- Greg Boyd on Anabaptism: Several 90-minute sessions with Greg Boyd will also include other conversation partners in the church. The first is set for Sept. 17, 2–3:30 pm Eastern
- Where is the Good News for Rural Folk? Sept 30, 2–3:30 pm Eastern
- How We Got the Bible, Oct 29, 2–3:30 pm Eastern

www.ambs.edu/webinars

Online Short Courses

Creating a Scene in Corinth: Conflict in 1 Corinthians, led by Reta Halteman Finger, Sept 2–Oct 13

www.ambs.edu/churchleadershipcenter/bible-short-courses.cfm

Preaching Seminar

Preaching as Testimony, led by Allan Rudy-Froese. Offered in two locations: Elkhart: Nov 3–4 and Jan 25 | AMBS Kansas Center: Nov 13–14 and Feb 26

www.ambs.edu/preachingseminar

Research for Ministry

An online seminar in which participants use library ebooks and online journals

www.ambs.edu/churchleadershipcenter/research-for-ministry.cfm

Pastors Week

January 25–28

The Bible Says What? Discovering Scripture Anew in Jesus' Company

Speakers: Jewel Gingerich Longenecker and Bryan Moyer Suderman

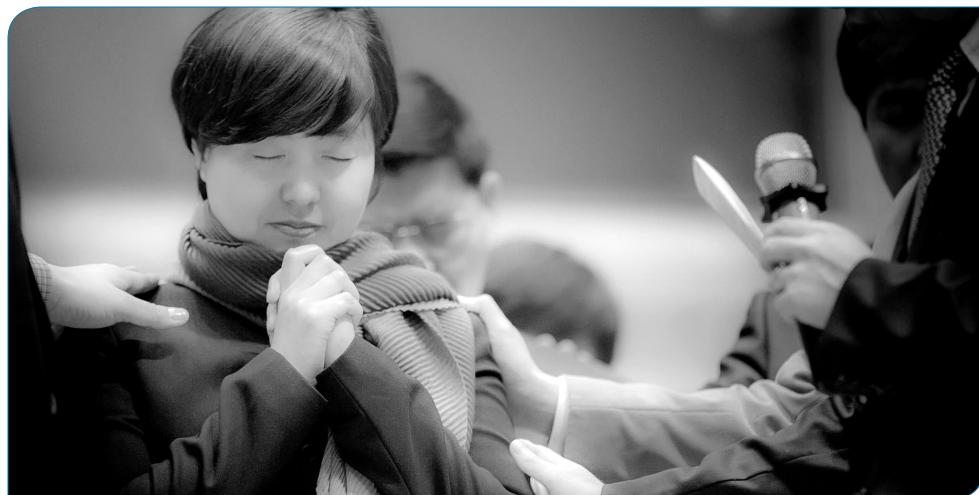
www.ambs.edu/pastorsweek

Leadership Clinics

Five day-long sessions on Monday, Jan 25, focus on biblical study, disaster preparedness as a ministry essential, innovative church planting practices, trauma healing and ministry, and a gathering for new pastors.

www.ambs.edu/leadershipclinics

SunJu Moon licensed toward ordination



SunJu Moon (MDiv 2011) is the first Mennonite woman pastor in South Korea to be licensed toward ordination. Central District Conference of Mennonite Church USA and the Korean Anabaptist Fellowship shared in her credentialing on March 13. Participating in the service were **Bock Ki Kim (MDiv 2002)**, **Margaret Sawatsky (MATS 1996)** and **Lois Kaufmann (MACF 2007)**. The service took place at the Christian school where SunJu serves as a chaplain. ●

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ALUMNI NEWS NOTES

Charleen (MDiv 2007) and **Kendall Jongejan Harder (MDiv 2007)** were ordained at ValleyView Mennonite Church, London, Ont., Nov. 16.

David Kratz Mathies (MATS 1995), associate professor at Missouri Western State University, published his first book, *Common Grounds without Foundations: A Pragmatic Approach to Ethical Disagreements across Cultural, Philosophical, and Religious Traditions*.

Bob Yoder (MDiv 2001) recently published *Helping Youth Grieve: The Good News of Biblical Lament* (Wipf and Stock).

Jeff Boyd (MAPS 2012), secretary at the Adventist

Peace Fellowship and research coordinator at Tiny Hands International, published three essays recently. "The Deck-Chair Shuffle?" in *Do Justice: Our Call to Faithful Living* (Signs Publishing, 2014) and two essays in *Church and Society: Missiological Challenges for the Seventh-day Adventist Church* (Andrews University Press, 2015): "War, Peace, and Nonviolence" and "Advocates for Social Change: Beyond Teaching People How to Fish."

Gloria Beck (former student) was ordained for ministry at Lockport Mennonite Church, West Unity, Ohio, on Feb. 1. She began serving as pastor of

Arnaud Mennonite Church, Arnaud, Man., on Feb. 16.

Births

Mariella Shue Hochstetler was born to **Jeff Hochstetler (MDiv 2015)** and Kelsey Shue, Dalton, Ohio, on June 1.

Nathaniel Reed Epp Stutzman born to **Twilla Epp Stutzman (MDiv 2005)** and **Karl Stutzman**, assistant director of digital library services, Goshen, Ind., on May 30.

Henry Andrew Saner was born to **Andrea Dalton Saner (MATS 2008)** and **Eric Saner (former administrative assistant)**, Harrisonburg, Va., on May 16.

Deaths

Wilfred Ulrich (BTh 1945) died Jan. 24 in Eureka, Ill.

Ernest Neufeld (BD 1964) died April 13 in Mountain Lake, Minn.

Elizabeth McDowell (MDiv 2004, MACF 2006) died March 7 in Bluffton, Ohio.

Kenneth Snyder (BTh, BRE 1952) died April 30 in Goshen, Ind.

Norman Lyndaker (MDiv 1971), Lowville, New York, died June 1. ●

A M B S NOTES

Janna Hunter-Bowman joins faculty



Janna Hunter-Bowman (MAPS 2012) joins the AMBS faculty as assistant professor of

peace studies and social ethics this summer. Appointed last year, she is completing her PhD at the University of Notre Dame.

Faculty scholarship

This year faculty and staff published seven books, four journal volumes, and a long list of essays, as well as presenting a variety of lectureships. Read the entire list of faculty and staff scholarship online: www.ambs.edu/publishing/Faculty-scholarship.cfm

Anabaptist Witness: Second volume online

The second issue of *Anabaptist Witness* focuses on what interaction with people of other religious faiths might look like for Anabaptists. Essays explore the field of the "theology of religions." Read the issue online or learn how to purchase a copy:

www.anabaptistwitness.org

Encourage someone to visit AMBS

Encourage someone you know with gifts for ministry to attend a fall Seminary Preview Day, September 25 or November 13. If the person you encourage comes for a visit, you will receive a discount for an upcoming Church Leadership Center offering (see page 2). Learn more: www.ambs.edu/visitAMBS

Rooted and Grounded

AMBS will host a second Rooted and Grounded conference on land and Christian discipleship, October 1–3. Featured speakers are **Wilma Bailey (MDiv 1977)**, Sylvia Keesmaat and Ched Myers. Additional information is available at www.ambs.edu/rootedandgrounded

!Explore for summer 2016

The AMBS program that encourages teenagers to consider ministry—!Explore: A Theological Program for High School Youth—will be offered in summer 2016. Pastors, congregations and the youth are all involved as the young people do 100-hour internships in their home settings in addition to the group experience at AMBS (July 5–20). Learn more and find enrollment forms at www.ambs.edu/explore

Faculty blog posts

Three AMBS faculty members have recently published guest posts on Sara Wenger Shenk's Practicing Reconciliation blog:

- **Jamie Pitts**, assistant professor of Anabaptist Studies: "The Theological Shape of Discernment: A Brief Guide.""
- **David B. Miller**, associate professor of missional leadership development: "Living into the Tension."
- **Safwat Marzouk**, assistant professor of Old Testament: "Prayers of Protest: One Step Towards Embodied Discipleship."

Visit www.ambs.edu/practicingreconciliation to read these posts and posts by Sara Wenger Shenk. ●

IN MEMORIAM

Henry Poettcker

Henry Poettcker, president emeritus of MBS, died Sunday, May 24, in Winnipeg, Man., following a brief



hospitalization. He was 90.

Henry earned a BD in 1953. Beginning in 1978 he served as president and professor of New Testament, retiring in 1990.

As the first Canadian president of MBS, Poettcker fostered a closer link between the seminaries and Canadian Mennonite Bible University. Walter Sawatsky, professor emeritus of church history and mission, observed. He added, "Henry's leadership style modeled a collegial approach that conveyed his belief that faculty needed a sense of freedom and were assumed to be part of the seminary leadership."

Jacob Elias, professor emeritus of New Testament who served as dean most of the years that Henry was president, said, "Several adjectives rise to the top when I recall Henry as colleague and Christian brother: gracious, dedicated, pastoral, organized, warm, humble. His style of leadership was to empower others in their ministries. He had a keen awareness of the challenges and opportunities facing congregations in Canada and the United States, as well as internationally."

For a full obituary, visit www.ambs.edu/news

Rosie Reschly

Rosie Reschly, retired executive assistant to the president, dean and vice president, died June 10. She served with seven presidents (including acting presidents and interim presidents) during the 23 years she worked at AMBS.



Rosie retired in 2011, a decision resulting in part from the health affects of cancer treatments.

Rosie is remembered for her strong administrative gifts; her encouraging, caring, positive spirit; and her calm, competent approach to all that she did.



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A seminary of
Mennonite Church USA and
Mennonite Church Canada

Millard Lind

Millard Lind, scholar, pastor, writer and professor emeritus of Old Testament, died on Saturday, April 25, at his home in Goshen, Ind. He was 96.

He earned a BD from GBS in 1947, later also earning a ThM and ThD. In 1959 he joined the faculty of GBS.

Ben Ollenburger, professor of biblical theology, reflected, "Millard Lind was the pioneer among Mennonites in Old Testament scholarship. His commitment to the church and its Lord was firm, and his scholarship was first class."

Daniel Schipani, professor of pastoral care, said, "He always shared generously and in inspiring ways from a wisdom that blended love of God, passion for the church, commitment to the Bible as the

main text of God's people, and unfailing dedication as a theological educator."

Willard Swartley, professor emeritus

of New Testament and a colleague of Lind's at AMBS, said, "Millard Lind was a much loved teacher and scholar. He was a great conversationalist in the AMBS lounge and over lunch: full of surprises on this or that topic."

Jacob Elias, professor emeritus of New Testament, said, "In his quiet and persistent way he conveyed a deep love for the Scriptures and a passionate commitment to

the peacemaking mission of the people of God."

For a full obituary, visit www.ambs.edu/news •

